



Including
Infants and Toddlers
with Disabilities

Enhancing Staff's Comfort and Confidence

Session 4

SpecialQuest

Multimedia Training Library

*Supporting Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities
and Their Families in Inclusive Settings*

Developed by

The Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program

California Institute on Human Services | Sonoma State University



SESSION
4



Enhancing Staff's Comfort and Confidence

Facilitator's Planning Worksheet



**1 hour,
50 minutes total**

SESSION

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Enhancing Staff's Comfort and Confidence

Learning Outcomes

- ♦ *Participants will identify strategies for early care and education providers to communicate effectively with families about the possibility of their infant or toddler being identified as having a disability.*
- ♦ *Participants will identify strategies that support early care and education providers as they work with families during the initial identification period.*

Agenda	Length	Facilitator
Introduction and Overview	5 minutes	
Agree on Ground Rules	5–10 minutes	
Communication Strategies with Families	1 hour, 20 minutes	
Lecturette	15 minutes	
View DVD: <i>Embrace Possibilities</i>	20 minutes	
Small-Group Discussion	30 minutes	
Large-Group Share-Back	15 minutes	
Wrap-Up	5 minutes	
Reflections/Continuous Improvement	10 minutes	

Icon Key



Chart



Note



Handouts



DVD



Key Point

Facilitation Team

 Name/Family Voice

 Name/Early Care and Education Voice

 Name/Early Intervention Voice

Presentation

 Date/Time

 Location

 # of Participants

What you will need:



Equipment:

- ☐ LCD/DVD/Monitor



Charting Equipment:

- ☐ Flip chart and markers
- ☐ Masking tape or pins



DVD:

- ☐ *Embrace Possibilities*



Handouts (English/Spanish):

- ☐ #1 Learning Outcomes
- ☐ #2 Communicating with Families: Tips for Success
- ☐ #3 Acknowledgements: *Embrace Possibilities*
- ☐ #4 Guided Viewing: *Embrace Possibilities*

Important Considerations

It is important to have this session co-facilitated by a family member and service provider so both viewpoints are represented. Personal examples will augment this session.

Before presenting this session, facilitators may want to review sessions in the *Building Relationships with Families* volume for material that relates to what is taught here.

- “Session 4: When Concerns Arise—Learning from Families’ Experiences,” provides a general discussion about supporting families when it is suspected that their child has a disability.
- “Session 5: Developing Family/Service Provider Relationships,” focuses on strategies for developing family/service provider relationships.
- “Session 7: Developing Family/Service Provider Leadership,” provides more specific strategies for communicating with families and supporting leadership opportunities.

The facilitation team may wish to consider presenting all three sessions in “Building Relationships with Families” in conjunction with this session in order to fully examine the complex issue of supporting families and staff during the initial identification period.

This session may evoke emotional reactions. It is important that the facilitator team creates a safe environment so that everyone can participate fully and learn from his or her experience.



Enhancing Staff's Comfort and Confidence



Enhancing Staff's Comfort and Confidence

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Facilitator's Script



1 hour,
50 minutes total



5 minutes

Enhancing Staff's Comfort and Confidence

Introduction and Overview

Welcome to our session, "Enhancing Staff's Comfort and Confidence."

My name is _____. I represent the voice of _____
(family, early intervention, early care and education). Facilitating with
me today are _____ (name/voice) and _____
(name/voice).



Facilitators briefly introduce themselves and describe the unique background and experiences they bring to this session.

In the DVD, *Creating Bright Futures*, developed by the Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program, Rochelle Pleasant says, "One of the privileges of caring for young children is supporting them to grow and learn." Yet, some children's development does not unfold as expected, and early care and education service providers often are the first to become concerned. In these instances, early care and education staff sometimes feel unprepared to discuss their concerns with families.

Enhancing Staff's Comfort and Confidence

This session focuses specifically on how service providers can:

- ♦ *Approach families with developmental concerns, and*
- ♦ *Support families as they cope with the initial identification of a disability.*



Add participant introductions/openers, as needed.

Review the Learning Outcomes and Agenda.

See Facilitator's Guide.

Learning Outcomes



Handout #1: Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes for this session are:

- ♦ *Participants will identify strategies for early care and education providers to communicate effectively with families about the possibility of their infant or toddler being identified as having a disability.*
- ♦ *Participants will identify strategies that support early care and education providers as they work with families during the initial identification period.*

Agenda

Agree on Ground Rules

Communication Strategies with Families

- Lecturette
- View DVD: *Embrace Possibilities*
- Small-Group Discussion
- Large-Group Share-Back

Wrap-Up

Reflections/Continuous Improvement



5–10 minutes



Agree on Ground Rules

See Facilitator's Guide.

Chart and post ground rules.



1 hour,
20 minutes total



15 minutes



Communication Strategies with Families

Lecturette

How many of you have shared your concerns about a child's development with his or her family?

It can be a difficult situation. Many early care and education providers tell us they feel they don't have the proper training and are unsure of exactly what to do or how much to say.

In this session we present planning strategies and communication techniques that will boost staff's competence and confidence in communicating with families.



Handout #2: Communicating with Families: Tips for Success

Let's look at the following steps for effective communication when concerns arise. Please take out Handout #2 and take 2–3 minutes to review the content.



Invite participants to give 2–3 examples and share experiences for each question. Make sure participants maintain confidentiality if a particularly sensitive situation is raised. Wrap up and summarize the discussion.



What examples or experiences have you had in preparing for the conversation with families?

What examples or experiences have you had in expressing your concerns to families?

What examples or experiences have you had in following up with families?



20 minutes

View DVD: *Embrace Possibilities*

The DVD that you are about to see is called *Embrace Possibilities*. The purpose of the DVD is to share information from the perspectives of families and early care and education and early intervention staff about the early identification of an infant or toddler with a possible delay in development or a disability.



Handout #3: Acknowledgements: *Embrace Possibilities*

Handout #4: Guided Viewing: *Embrace Possibilities*

Enhancing Staff's Comfort and Confidence

Please take out the Guided Viewing Handout # 4 and think about the following questions as you watch the *Embrace Possibilities* DVD:

- ♦ *When concerns arise or you suspect a child might have a disability, what are the challenging aspects about discussing this with families?*
- ♦ *What skills do staff members need to acquire to communicate effectively with families?*
- ♦ *How could you enhance your program's strengths and community partnerships in this area?*
- ♦ *How could you strengthen this component of your program?*



Start DVD: *Embrace Possibilities* (15 minutes)



30 minutes

Small-Group Discussion



Allow the participants to share their reactions to the DVD for a few minutes. Then divide the participants into small groups.

In your small groups, discuss the questions listed on the handout.

- ♦ *When concerns arise or you suspect a child might have a disability, what are the challenging aspects about discussing this with families?*
- ♦ *What skills do staff members need to acquire to communicate effectively with families?*

- ♦ *How could you enhance your program's strengths and community partnerships in this area?*
- ♦ *How could you strengthen this component of your program?*

You have 30 minutes, after which each group will share its ideas.
Be prepared to share at least 1 response for each question.



15 minutes



Large-Group Share-Back

Solicit feedback on one question at a time. Get at least one response from each group for each question.



When concerns arise or you suspect a child might have a disability, what are the challenging aspects about discussing this with families?



Add any of the following key points not mentioned by the group:

- ♦ *Staff may feel uncomfortable and unprepared.*
- ♦ *Staff may not know how to express their concerns.*
- ♦ *Staff don't want to upset the family.*



What skills do staff need to acquire to communicate effectively with families?



Add any of the following key points not mentioned by the group:

- ♦ *Listening skills*
- ♦ *How to communicate their concerns to families*
- ♦ *How to work with interpreters, if needed*
- ♦ *How to approach cultural issues*
- ♦ *Knowing when to say they need help*
- ♦ *How to access community resources to match family needs*



How could you enhance your program's strengths and community partnerships in this area?



Add any of the following key points not mentioned by the group:

- ♦ *Insure that there are internal mechanisms for staff support and supervision.*
- ♦ *Maintain an atmosphere for safe sharing and problem solving among staff and with families.*
- ♦ *Create ongoing opportunities for staff at all levels to collaborate with community partners to share ideas and information.*
- ♦ *Work with early intervention staff to meet individual family and staff needs.*



How could you strengthen this component of your program?



Add any of the following key points not mentioned by the group:

- ♦ *Provide mentor and supervision models and resources for staff.*
- ♦ *Provide ongoing staff meetings, discussions, and training opportunities.*



5 minutes

Wrap-Up



Are there any questions or comments about the training today?



Review Learning Outcomes.

See Facilitator's Guide.



10 minutes

Reflections/Continuous Improvement

We now would like to give you an opportunity to think about how this session today applies to your work situation. Please list 2–3 strategies you can start to use next week.



Gather Continuous Improvement Feedback.

See Facilitator's Guide.

Your suggestions for improvements help us to make our sessions responsive to your needs as learners. We'd like to hear about what worked for you in this session and what could be done to facilitate your learning.



Divide a piece of chart paper into 2 columns, as shown. Entitle 1 column **"What worked?"** and the other column **"Suggestions for improvement."**

What worked?	Suggestions for improvement

Chart participants' comments without rebuttal or discussion. Facilitators can act on these suggestions, as appropriate, in future training sessions.





What worked for you today?

What suggestions for improvement do you have?

Thank you for your participation today.

End training session



Learning Outcomes

- ♦ *Participants will identify strategies for early care and education providers to communicate effectively with families about the possibility of their infant or toddler being identified as having a disability.*
- ♦ *Participants will identify strategies that support early care and education providers as they work with families during the initial identification period.*



Session 4 Handout #1



Communicating with Families

Tips for Success

Preparing for the conversation:

- | Make objective notes about the challenges the child is experiencing.
- | List specific examples from your observations.
 - For example, "Jamal communicates with us using gestures and an occasional word."
- | Role-play with a colleague. Practice exactly how you will present your concerns to the family.
- | Schedule a meeting with the family.
- | Consider approaches that are culturally and linguistically appropriate.
- | Know your community resources. Be prepared with suggestions about where the family can go for answers to their questions.
- | Gather your thoughts; stay calm and focused.

Expressing your concerns:

- | Choose a private and comfortable setting for your conversation.
- | Assure the family that your discussion is confidential.
- | Listen first.
 - Start with the family's stories, visions, dreams, concerns, and priorities.
 - Ask the family to talk about their child. For example, "What does he like to do at home?" "Does she like to play with her sister?"
 - Provide specific, nonjudgmental examples of your concerns. For example, "When I call Lisa's name she does not turn her head."
- | Be open to new ideas and different viewpoints from the family and others.
- | Express empathy and compassion.
- | Remember that this may be difficult for families and that they may express a variety of emotions (e.g. shock, relief, anger, disbelief). Listen with respect and be nonjudgmental.

Session 4 Handout #2



- | Answer questions honestly. If you don't know the answer, it is okay to say that you will follow up and get back to them.
- | If parents are ready to consider further steps, have suggestions ready (the referral and assessment process, phone numbers, etc.).
- | Remember that you are there to support the family with the next steps.

Following up:

- | If the family needs time to think about what was discussed, offer to meet again in two weeks, or at their convenience.
- | If the family is ready for referral, explain the referral process and support them in the next steps.
- | If the family disagrees with your observations, continue to observe and document for future discussions.
- | Continue to be an advocate for the child and family—accompany them, if requested, to meetings and appointments.

Session 4 Handout #2



Embrace Possibilities

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the following individuals and programs for their incredible contributions to the development of this DVD. *Embrace Possibilities* was produced by Joan E. Porter and Gary Christian Film and Video, in collaboration with the Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program in 1999. Many families and service providers participated in the videotaping and interviews, while others offered us the help and hospitality that made the project possible. Our sincere appreciation is extended to each of them and to their families and their colleagues behind the scenes:

- ◆ Cathie Allport, Director, Developmental Play Group, Williamsburg, Virginia
- ◆ Sarah Brassert, Acting Area Director, Head Start Plus Area, Neighborhood House Association, San Diego, California
- ◆ Marcia Callender, Parent and Trainer, Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program, Bronx, New York
- ◆ Children, Families, and Staff, 41st Early Head Start, Neighborhood House Association, San Diego, California
- ◆ Children, Families, and Staff, Cheriton Migrant Head Start, Cheriton, Virginia
- ◆ Children, Families, and Staff, Child Development Resources, Norge, Virginia
- ◆ Children, Families, and Staff, Rosemount Center, Washington, DC
- ◆ Nancy Deutsch, Social Worker (Infant Development Program), San Diego Unified School District, San Diego, California
- ◆ Barbara Fielding, Director of Children, Youth, and Family Services, Neighborhood House Association, San Diego, California
- ◆ Corinne Garland, Executive Director, Child Development Resources, Norge, Virginia
- ◆ Catherine Goins, Early Head Start Coordinator, Sacramento Employment Training Agency, Sacramento, California
- ◆ Jacki Haight, Director, Early Childhood Program, Port Gamble S'Klallam Head Start, Kingston, Washington
- ◆ Stacy Keating, Parent, Williamsburg, Virginia

Session 4 Handout #3



- ◆ *Linda Koontz, Disabilities Specialist, Head Start Plus Area, Neighborhood House Association, San Diego, California*
- ◆ *Kerry Larkins, Center Director, 41st Street Center, Neighborhood House Association, Early Head Start, San Diego, California*
- ◆ *Karen McKinney, Early Head Start Director, Rosemount Center, Washington, DC*
- ◆ *Marsha McLean, Director, Child Development Resources, First Steps, Williamsburg, Virginia*
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- ◆ *Aracelly Valverde, Staff, Trainer and Family Member, Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program, San Diego, California*
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- ◆ *Ana Yepez, Parent and Resource Parent, Exceptional Family Resource Center, San Diego, California*

Session 4 Handout #3



Guided Viewing: *Embrace Possibilities*

As you watch the DVD, consider the following questions:

When concerns arise or you suspect a child might have a disability, what are the challenging aspects about discussing this with families?

What skills do staff members need to acquire to communicate effectively with families?

How could you enhance your program's strengths and community partnerships in this area?

How could you strengthen this component of your program?

Session 4 Handout #4



Session 4 Handout #4